

Policy for NCRC Regional Seminars

Revised February 12, 2011

This document summarizes the policies and procedures by which NCRC Regional Seminars shall be organized and conducted.

Purpose of Regional Seminars

Regional seminars are intended to train the bulk of cave rescue resources, to provide a wide range of cave rescue training opportunities, and to include courses drawn from the core concepts of the NCRC national curricula but tailored to local needs.

Training Levels Available Via Regional Seminars

The NCRC Orientation to Cave Rescue (OCR) is the most common regional seminar. It is intended to provide a basic overview of horizontal cave rescue techniques appropriate for members of rescue groups or persons integrated into relatively large-scale rescue operations. It is commonly delivered in a weekend format. While the general framework of the OCR curriculum must be followed, the exact content is somewhat flexible and should be tailored to regional/local cave conditions and the specific needs of the participants.

NCRC Level I and Level II curricula may be delivered at the regional level, in either weeklong or modular (typically multiple weekend) formats. National curricula for these courses must be followed closely to ensure students are adequately prepared for the higher-level courses that follow. Reasonable additions to the curricula may be made to meet specific local needs, provided they do not detract from the integrity of the national curricula. Any variations to NCRC curriculum, testing methods and materials, or course schedules must be authorized, in advance, by the NCRC Training Coordinator.

Customized courses may be offered to meet specific local or regional needs (e.g., self rescue, instructor training, single-rope techniques). These courses should draw upon concepts outlined in the NCRC national curricula (OCR, Level I, II and III), but may incorporate material from other reputable sources.

NCRC Level III and Instructor Qualification courses are generally offered only at National Seminars, as these courses serve as the immediate precursors to instructor certification. They may be delivered regionally only under special circumstances (detailed in the next section).

Authorization for Regional Seminars

No training may be represented as that of the NCRC without the specific, preauthorization of the NCRC Training Coordinator. Requests for authorization to deliver NCRC training must be made in writing (e-mail acceptable) prior to the seminar. They should be submitted 60 days in advance then possible, using the Seminar Authorization Request Form located on the NCRC website. The seminar must not be publicly announced until approval has been granted. The Training Coordinator has the authority to approve (or deny) delivery of OCR, Level I, Level II, and customized courses.

Authorization to teach NCRC Level III or Instructor Qualification courses may be granted only by the NCRC Board of Regional Coordinators, except in the event a national seminar is cancelled or re-designated as a regional event (see NCRC Policy for National Seminars). In this rare case, a Level III and/or Instructor Qualification course may be taught that year at a regional seminar at the discretion of the NCRC Training Coordinator. Instructors for Level III shall be appointed by the NCRC Training Coordinator.

Minimum Requirements for Regional Seminars (Amended Jan 31, 2009)

Regional seminars must have a designated Course Lead Instructor who is a current NCRC instructor and an additional current NCRC instructor for each level being offered. In addition the seminar must have a site coordinator, sufficient assisting instructors to maintain an approximate 1:5 instructor-to-student ratio, current NCRC curriculum appropriate for the course in question, equipment in good working order, and a safe teaching environment.

Regional Seminar Personnel Qualifications (Amended Jan 31, 2009)

A course lead instructor must be a current NCRC instructor in good standing, and must have the approval of the NCRC Training Coordinator to serve in the course lead instructor role for the specific event in question. Each level being offered must have a designated lead level instructor. The required level lead instructor must be a current NCRC instructor in good standing, and must have the approval of the NCRC Training Coordinator to serve. Assisting instructors may be other NCRC instructors (current or past), or may be “specialists” who, in the opinion of the lead instructor, have skills and knowledge that will contribute positively to the learning environment and safety of the event.

The site coordinator should be a person with good organizational and promotional skills, willing to make the necessary arrangements for the class, recruit students, and complete documentation. No specific NCRC training is required, but the person providing the function must be approved for the event by the NCRC Training Officer.

The NCRC strongly encourages the use of NCRC instructors to the extent feasible.

Selection of Regional Seminar Sites

Regional seminar sites are selected by the event’s lead instructor and site coordinator, subject to approval by the NCRC Training Coordinator.

Site Coordination vs Training Coordination

The site coordinator and lead instructor shall be responsible for locating the site of the seminar, identifying and gaining access to caves and other training sites, arranging use of facilities, securing food services, adequate lodging, and transportation for students once on site, and otherwise supporting the logistical needs (as applicable) of the training event.

The NCRC host region is responsible for developing an acceptable budget, managing the event’s finances, promoting the event, producing all required documentation, collecting student and instructor information, and providing any other needed support functions.

The lead instructor is responsible for coordination of training activities at a regional seminar, and must ensure the training covers and concurs with the applicable national curriculum and meets applicable safety standards. Failure in either respect (as determined by the NCRC Training Coordinator) could result in loss of instructor privileges or certification.

Curriculum

The NCRC national office will (upon request) provide the region with an up-to-date copy of applicable curriculum, but shall not be responsible for producing copies for distribution to students or instructors.

Quality Control

“An Instructor Update shall be required prior to each national and regional seminar, and shall apply to Level 1 and higher seminars, but not to Small Party Self Rescue or Orientation to Cave Rescue events.

“The content of the Update shall be defined by the Training Coordinator or his/her designee and shall include an overview of policies, procedures and curriculum changes that have occurred within the last 3 years, and any other material determined by the Training Coordinator or BORG as necessary for inclusion.

“The coordinator or lead instructor of the proposed course must include a request for an Instructor Update in his/her seminar authorization request packet, and must clearly describe any requests for exemption (whether for the seminar in full or for individual instructors/specialists).

“The training coordinator may authorize an exemption to this policy if, in his/her opinion, reasonable accommodations have been made to ensure all participating instructors/specialists will be fully informed of current NCRC policies, procedures and curriculum relevant to said instructor/specialists’ assignments during the seminar.

“The course coordinator/lead instructor shall, in a timely manner, provide to the database manager a list of NCRC instructors who completed the Instructor Update.”

The lead instructor is responsible for ensuring all persons teaching at a regional seminar are up-to-date on NCRC curriculum in the subjects they will teach. Persons serving as “specialists” must teach to NCRC learning objectives.

A seminar’s lead instructor, or the lead instructors for each level, must complete written evaluations of other NCRC instructors teaching under their authority.

Critical Documentation

All students, instructors, and staff members must sign and remit a current copy of the NCRC liability waiver form. Each person must also complete a contact information form so their participation can be appropriately tracked in the NCRC database.

Certificates

Participants of regional seminars may be provided with certificates of completion or participation. Certificates of completion may be issued to persons who have successfully completed the course, meeting the full requirements of the NCRC for that curriculum. Certificates of participation may be issued to those persons who have participated in, but not successfully completed, the course.

Regions may issue certificates for OCR and customized classes. All certificates for Level I, II, III and IQ courses must be issued by the NCRC national office.

Important Note: Completion of an NCRC course does NOT convey certification in cave rescue. Certification implies the student possesses a specific level of skill. The NCRC has no mechanism to ensure its students maintain the skills developed during its courses. It does not, therefore, issue certification. The distinction between a certificate documenting successful completion of a course and certification is subtle but important, and should be carefully explained to course participants.

Youth Participation

Youth (under age 18) may participate in NCRC training events only if the following requirements are met:

1. The youth must, in the opinion of the lead instructor, have sufficient physical, emotional, and mental maturity to perform safely and effectively as a member of the class.
2. The youth's primary guardian(s) must sign the NCRC liability waiver in the presence of the event's lead instructor. If a primary guardian cannot sign the course documentation in the presence of the lead instructor, their signature must be notarized. The primary guardian(s) must also provide the lead instructor with a medical status summary and authorize NCRC to seek medical treatment for the youth if deemed necessary.
3. An adult must accompany them in the class, in such a manner to ensure the adult will be physically near the youth throughout the training activities. Preferably the adult should be enrolled as a co-student, but other arrangements may be allowed at the discretion of the lead instructor. (An adult participating in another level or subgroup would not qualify as an accompanying adult). If the accompanying adult is not the youth's primary guardian, the primary guardian must provide the lead instructor with a written statement identifying the person who will accompany the youth and designating him or her to act as temporary guardian during the course. This statement must be signed in the presence of the lead instructor or notarized.

Budget/Accounting

Site coordinators shall make diligent efforts to minimize the cost of regional seminars, while maintaining seminar quality. No one involved in a regional seminar in an NCRC instructor or organizational role shall benefit monetarily from the seminar, nor will NCRC seminars be conducted as fundraisers for grottos, rescue groups, or other organizations. Income in excess of expenses resulting from a regional seminar shall be held in the region's NSS-approved bank

account. Regions lacking such an account may convert the excess revenue to equipment for incorporation into the region's NCRC equipment cache, or submit it to the NCRC national account to be held on the host region's behalf. Cosponsors of NCRC regional events may receive reasonable compensation from event proceeds to cover their costs and contributions.

The site coordinator is responsible for careful tracking of income and expenses associated with a regional seminar. Receipts shall be issued to each paying party, and obtained for each expense. All applicable bills shall be paid within 60 days of the seminar's conclusion, and a detailed accounting of the seminar produced.

Applicable Fees

NCRC regional seminars may be responsible for a variety of fees payable to the NCRC national account. Application varies by course type as follows:

OCR and Customized Courses:

- Administrative Fee: \$5 per student

Level I, II, III, IQ Courses:

- Administrative Fee: \$5 per student
- Curriculum Development Fee: \$15 per student
- Equipment Fee: \$35 per student (may be retained in region as equipment. Accounting must itemize income and expense in this category. Equipment fees not used by the region must be returned to the National account.) These fees are in addition to any other costs associated with the seminar (including the cost of transporting the NCRC equipment cache to the seminar site and replacement of damaged/lost equipment), and should be planned for in the seminar's budget.

Fee for Non-NSS Members (amended Feb 12, 2011)

All Weeklong Seminars [including modular versions] will add a surcharge fee for non-NSS members. The surcharge fee will apply to all L1 and higher weeklong classes unless waived by the National Coordinator. For Regional Seminars the fee will be equal to the current NSS Regular annual membership fee plus at least \$10.00 and no more than \$50.00 as established in that seminar's approved budget. The surcharge over the normal NSS membership fee will go to the budget of that specific seminar as additional income or to offset other cost as needed.

Insurance

Any approved NCRC seminar is covered under the NSS liability insurance policy, at no additional cost, provided the NSS office has been notified of said seminar in advance. This policy covers only above-ground activities, not those conducted below-ground. Proof of insurance, if required, can be obtained from the NSS office and should be requested well in advance of the seminar's start date.

Instructor Expenses

Regional seminars are not required to offset any proportion of their instructors' or staff members' costs, but may do so within reason.

Selection of Instructors

Lead instructors may select any qualified persons (as described above) to serve on the instruction staff of regional seminars, subject to review and modification by the NCRC Training Coordinator.

Promotion of Regional Seminars

Coordinators of regional seminars are encouraged to promote them as broadly as possible, and to post all events to the national NCRC web site. Seminar information (course title, date, place, cost, registration details) should be sent directly to the NCRC webmaster (see website at ncrc.info). Regional seminars may, however, be directed at a specific audience, and coordinators may restrict promotion as needed to meet the event's objectives.

Use of NCRC Logo

Use of the NCRC logo for regional seminar promotion and correspondence is encouraged. However, use of the logo, or any close facsimile, for items of apparel (hats, shirts, jackets, etc.) is strictly prohibited. Apparel items should clearly indicate their association with the specific training event for which they are produced. These restrictions are intended to prevent the wearers from misrepresenting themselves (intentionally or accidentally) as "members" of the NCRC or conveying the impression that NCRC is a "rescue group."

Coordination with the Regional Coordinator

All regional NCRC training activities should be coordinated with the applicable NCRC Regional Coordinator. This includes identification of training topics and dates, selection of seminar personnel, promotion, collaboration with other entities, establishment of course fees, etc. While authorization for any NCRC training event must ultimately be granted by the NCRC Training Coordinator, that authorization will rarely be granted without the concurrence of the Regional Coordinator. Regional Coordinators are responsible for ensuring the quality of NCRC training in their respective regions, and their schedules should be accommodated to ensure they (or their representative) can attend and participate to the extent they deem necessary.

Post-Seminar Documentation

Within 60 days of a training event's conclusion the site coordinator and/or lead instructor must submit the following documentation to the NCRC National Coordinator:

- A brief report, signed by the lead instructor, summarizing the event's details (name of class, date, location, lead instructor, site coordinator, assistant instructors, and curriculum topics covered)
- A list of contact information for each student, instructor and staff member. Include the course status (successfully completed, participated but did not complete) for each student.
- Original liability waivers for all persons involved in the seminar (including any additional documentation for youth participants)
- Copies of evaluations of NCRC Instructors teaching at the seminar.
- A detailed final accounting, providing a complete and organized record of all income and expenses attributable to the seminar.
- A check or checks for fees due to the NCRC national account. Make payable to National Cave Rescue Commission. Include documentation (may appear in the memo line of the check) of the amount of each fee remitted.